

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Canceled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (canceled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.-13. (Canceled).

14. (Currently Amended) A method for pressing a ceramic stacked layer structure, comprising the steps of:

laterally holding sidewalls of a die at a predetermined position on a die base using a plurality of thrust mechanisms, wherein the die has a bottom plate and the sidewalls forming a recess for receiving the ceramic layered structure; and

vertically pressing the ceramic layered structure in the recess between the bottom plate and a top die and while applying lateral force via the plurality of thrust mechanisms on outer faces of the sidewalls in horizontal directions toward the recess, wherein the ceramic layered structure is a plurality of ceramic green sheets stacked on one another.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the thrust mechanisms are attached to the die base.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the bottom plate and sidewalls are discrete components.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the bottom plate and the sidewalls are integral.

18. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of:
placing the stacked layer structure into the recess in the die; and
transporting the die with the stacked layer structure in the recess to the die base.

19. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein said plurality of thrust mechanisms comprise four thrust mechanisms.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the ceramic layered structure is pressed in the recess between the bottom plate and the top die and the lateral force is applied via the plurality of thrust mechanisms on outer faces of the sidewalls in directions toward the recess simultaneously.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14, wherein the bottom plate includes a step formed at its periphery, and the sidewalls are fitted to the step.

22. (Previously Presented) The method claim 14, wherein the sidewalls of an entire perimeter of the die are laterally held by the plurality of thrust mechanism and

the lateral force is applied to the entire perimeter of the die while vertically pressing the ceramic layered structure.